United Nations S/PV.3564

Security Council

Fiftieth Year

Provisional

3564th Meeting

Thursday, 10 August 1995, 5.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wisnumurti	(Indonesia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cárdenas
	Botswana	Mr. Nkgowe
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Czech Republic	Mr. Kovanda
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Germany	Mr. Eitel
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Italy	Mr. Fulci
	Nigeria	Mr. Gambari
	Oman	Mr. Al-Khussaiby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sidorov
	Rwanda	Mr. Ubalijoro
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

95-85826 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 5.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Misić (Bosnia and Herzegovina) took a place at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/1995/677, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following other documents: S/1995/674, letter dated 8 August 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Kazakstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/1995/679, letter dated 9 August 1995 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

The first speaker is the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on whom I now call.

Mr. Misić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): While in recent days the international community has focused its attention and activities on the exodus of many thousands of refugees from Croatia rather than on the tragic humanitarian situation that has not ceased in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the bloody details of the expulsion of some 60,000 civilians from the so-called safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa have disappeared. The destiny of at least 10,000 civilians who never reached the safety of the territory under the control of my Government has been hidden under the dark, deadly curtain that Mladic and Karadzic have thrown over these unfortunate regions — regions that have simply been abandoned by the world.

Behind the slow advance of an ever wider flood of Serbian refugees from Croatia, light has never been shed on the incomparably more severe suffering of those Bosniac Muslims, who, barehanded, stood no chance against the Pale war criminals. With this humiliation and extermination, many of those who even today are not clear whether or not they would protect the remaining safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina have claimed that their mandate was not to protect the civilians or to defend the safe areas.

These very same interpreters of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not shown nearly as much interest, or made nearly as much effort, in preventing the Pale Serb leaders from starting a new series of cruel and savage crimes. Today's discoveries by the United States Government, which appears very lonely in its efforts to establish the truth, disclose the facts and empower the work of the war crimes Tribunal. These discoveries have finally shed more light on what took place in Srebrenica and Zepa. We owe much gratitude to the German delegation and to delegations of the caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement, which have repeatedly raised the issue of the people missing from Zepa and Srebrenica.

The savage terror inflicted by the criminals against the innocent civilians of Srebrenica and Zepa did not manage to receive more attention, despite the repeated appeals by my Government, except for a couple of presidential statements and the occasional statement to the Press.

Today's resolution, we feel, is a small step forward. Nevertheless, this is a resolution that more clearly articulates care, even though it may be irreparably late for many.

When speaking on the draft resolution on Croatia, I expressed my satisfaction that in the alleviation of the situation of Serb refugees from Croatia, certain standards for minimizing the suffering and helping the victims of humanitarian crises have improved, and have risen to a higher level. With this improvement comes swiftness of

action and the inventiveness of humanitarian organization. One proof for this is the intention to use for humanitarian purposes the military airport in Banja Luka, which until now has been used only for carrying out destructive actions and acts of killing Bosnians from the air.

In the meantime, all the appeals of the Bosnian Government directed in the past two years to the United Nations Secretary-General and the Security Council to open the Tuzla airport for humanitarian purposes have not borne fruit. Moreover, Sarajevo airport continues to be closed, upon the dictates of Karadzic's Serbs, despite its status being completely clear and its purpose solely humanitarian. For the fourth month, Sarajevo airport remains closed. The humanitarian situation in the city, coupled with continuing artillery attacks and sniping, is unbearable. We would hope that the criteria and standards of humanitarian actions would be unified, since any classification of victims is only a first step in the chain of injustice.

The humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been remarkably alleviated, thanks to the joint actions of the Bosnian and Croatian armies to lift the monstrous siege of Bihac and stop the terrorization resulting from the coordinated actions of the armed gangs of Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Subsequently, 200,000 inhabitants of the Bihac enclave, who spent three years in complete isolation, without any humanitarian assistance, have been saved.

The joint action of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia most likely saved the face of the international community, whose key members built for weeks the myth that practically nothing could have been done around Bihac, and justified this with the argument that there were too many armies there that were difficult to distinguish. I think the picture of the Bihac pocket is much clearer now.

The humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia will be easier to normalize and maintain if UNCRO ensures that its commitments, as accepted in the agreement with Croatia's Government, are fulfilled and that armed Serbs from Krajina surrender their weapons before they cross Bosnia on their way to Serbia. These weapons directly endanger the safety of Serb refugees, since the armed Serbs are provoking actions by firing from the refugee convoys — a matter on which the United Nations Secretariat has or could have some information.

In this draft resolution on Bosnia there is no mention of the destiny of those who have found refuge in Serbia from Zepa, but who have unfortunately become the subject of propaganda exploitation, and, we fear, new tortures, humiliation and even murder.

We request international humanitarian organizations to, without delay, if possible, complete their work on the registration of all those refugees, to continue to search for them and locate them, and to prevent their disappearance or further abuse and subjection to violations of the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law.

We look forward to prompt reporting by the Secretary-General on these issues, as requested by the Council in the draft resolution.

The President: It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): Germany took the initiative which led to the draft resolution on Srebrenica and Zepa now before the Council, because we are appalled and alarmed.

Several weeks after the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa we still do not know about the whereabouts and the fate of about 7,000 to 8,000 unfortunate male Bosnians who were taken prisoners by Bosnian Serbs and led away.

Where are they? What has happened to them? Are they alive and well? Today's news, and in particular the photographs which we have been shown by the Permanent Representative of the United States, increased our concern.

According to the latest update by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), only 164 detainees from Srebrenica and 44 from Zepa are registered so far. We insist that immediate access to all detainees from Srebrenica and Zepa must be granted to international humanitarian organizations. We demand that the safety and well-being of the detainees be ensured and that the civilian Bosnians taken prisoner be released immediately.

We condemn the persistent refusal by the Bosnian Serb party to allow access to representatives of the ICRC to the detainees in question. We cannot tolerate that the Bosnian Serbs are once again playing a cynical "hide and seek" game with international humanitarian organizations. Their practice of refusing to indicate the locations of the detainees, while claiming that they are willing to grant unhindered access to places where representatives of humanitarian organizations want to go, is totally unacceptable. This practice constitutes in itself a serious violation of international humanitarian law. Those responsible among the Bosnian Serb leadership must know such fundamental violations of humanitarian law will only bring them closer to the abyss.

Germany fully supports the ongoing efforts of the ICRC to gain access to the detainees in question. We also urge United Nations representatives to continue their efforts with the priority of finally getting information from Pale as to the whereabouts of the missing men. We continue to hope that they are alive. We will intensively follow this question until, hopefully, these unfortunate Bosnian men are found and released to their families.

We shall, of course, vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): With regard to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, my delegation has mixed feelings and reactions.

On the positive side, we note with satisfaction that the three-year siege on the enclave of Bihac has been lifted and that a supply line for humanitarian assistance to its population has been established. It is a welcome development also to read reports and see pictures of the population of Bihac who, for the first time in three years, have cause to breathe the air of freedom and, hopefully, look forward to a semblance of normal life.

We also hope that the lifting of the siege of the safe area of Bihac from the occupation by the Bosnian Serbs will not be short-lived.

On the other hand, however, the inhabitants of the safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa were not as lucky as those of Bihac. Their towns have been occupied by Bosnian Serb forces, and they have been forced out of their homes and been made to join the teeming ranks of refugees and displaced persons.

My delegation joins other Council members in reaffirming the total unacceptability of the occupation of these safe areas by the Bosnian Serb forces.

Of more immediate concern, however, are the reports of grave violations of international humanitarian law in and around Srebrenica. As of today over 7,000 young and middle-aged men, former inhabitants of Srebrenica, have not been accounted for. We therefore support the call in paragraph 1 of the resolution that the Bosnian Serb party give immediate access for representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international agencies to all the persons in its custody so that they can be duly documented as a first step to their immediate and unconditional release.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate what we have said in respect of Croatia: that the only hope for a durable and lasting peace is a negotiated settlement which accommodates the concerns of all the constituent groups.

In this connection, the Contact Group must redouble its efforts and demonstrate better unity of action in the promotion of a settlement on the basis of the Contact Group Peace Plan as a starting point.

Finally, it is our view that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be spared further horrors of war. They have suffered too much and too long from the atrocities committed by those who are also committed to the destruction of their multi-ethnic country.

Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman): Once again, the Security Council meets today in order to discuss the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina — a situation, in our opinion, caused by the continued and systematic aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a Member State of this Organization, namely, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We, however, like the rest of the international community, find ourselves at a point where we have to express our profound alarm and shock for the continuation of war in that part of Europe.

In the last three to four years since the fighting erupted in that area, many resolutions have been adopted by this Council, as well as by many other international

forums, calling on the parties involved to refrain from the use of force and to move steadily towards peaceful options in an attempt to demonstrate their political will and determination to resolve their differences peacefully. However, these calls and demands have not been heard, mainly due to the unreadiness of the Bosnian Serbs to adhere to the peace process.

We regret this outcome and today call yet again on those concerned to accept the Contact Group Peace Plan as a starting point. We believe that if the party concerned had accepted the plan it is very unlikely it would be in the situation in which it finds itself today.

Since the beginning of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, the international community has exerted strenuous efforts to bring the parties one step closer to peace. But, due to the position of one side — the Bosnian Serbs — all those efforts did not yield the expected results. On the contrary, in the last few months we have witnessed an unprecedented twist of events as never before. The United Nations peace-keepers came under direct and deliberate attack by parties, to the point where they were used as human shields. Civilians in the safe areas are shelled and "ethnically cleansed" before the very eyes of the international community, which has an obligation to protect the lives of those civilians who are under the daily threat of Serbian atrocities, a recent example of which was the last attack on the safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa, which have now fallen into the hands of the Bosnian Serbs.

Thousands of men have been taken by the Bosnian Serbs, and unfortunately we are told officially by the Secretariat that no access to the detainees has been given to the United Nations or the International Committee of the Red Cross. Their whereabouts are not known. This is not acceptable to the international community.

Oman, like the rest of the international community, accepts neither this new escalation of fighting by attacking United Nations peace-keepers nor the status quo prevailing in those safe areas which recently became subject to the policy of "ethnic cleansing". In this regard, we add our voice to those who have called on all those responsible to fully adhere to the repeated calls of the Security Council, as set out in the statements of its President on 20 and 25 July 1995, which demanded that the Bosnian Serb forces withdraw from the safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa and respect the status of the safe areas and ensure respect for human standards in accordance with international humanitarian law.

My delegation strongly supports the call for the unconditional release of all those who are detained.

Alarming and horrifying reports were revealed in the Council today by those who have witnessed and experienced the Bosnian Serbs' massacres at Srebrenica and Zepa. Oman believes that there is an obligation — a moral obligation, a political obligation — on all members of the international community to work together united with one voice that would say "No" to "ethnic cleansing", "No" to rape of Muslim women and "No" to the continued violations of the safe areas. We believe the time has come for this stand: enough massacres, enough killings, enough torture have taken place.

We pay tribute, a special tribute, to the Secretary-General, to his Special Representative to all United Nations personnel, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations for their efforts to find a peaceful solution in that area and to alleviate the sufferings of the people of that region.

Finally, in the spirit of consensus, because the draft resolution focuses on the humanitarian plight, my delegation will vote in favour of the text before us.

Mr. Nkgowe (Botswana): My delegation is seriously concerned by the reports that thousands of men and boys of military age have today not been accounted for in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the seizure of the enclaves of Srebrenica by the Bosnian Serb forces. The situation is further compounded by the fact that the Bosnian Serbs continue to deny the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross access to the displaced persons in Srebrenica. It is in the light of these concerns that my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

We hope the Bosnian Serbs will heed the contents of the draft resolution we are about to adopt. They must understand that they have an obligation under international law to facilitate the registration of all persons they hold prisoner and to treat prisoners of war in accordance with acceptable international standards. We therefore call upon the Bosnian Serbs to give the UNHCR, the ICRC and other international humanitarian agencies immediate access to all the displaced persons from Srebrenica and Zepa.

Mr. Sidorov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Russia, like other members of the Security Council, has sternly condemned the actions of the

Bosnian Serb army in Srebrenica in violation of Security Council decisions on safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are concerned by reports of flagrant violations of the norms of international humanitarian law in Srebrenica, which we believe should be duly investigated, and by the unavailability of information on the whereabouts of many former inhabitants of Srebrenica. We support the demand made in the draft resolution that the Bosnian Serbs give access for representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international agencies to those who have been displaced from Srebrenica and Zepa. It is also necessary that prisoners of war be treated properly and in accordance with international norms. We expect the report of the Secretary-General, to be submitted no later than 1 September, to shed light on the reported violations of international humanitarian law, and if such violations are confirmed the Security Council will have to respond appropriately.

The lesson to be learned from events in Srebrenica and Zepa is that we need to address directly the concept of safe areas and the modalities for implementing that concept. It is important to take steps to determine what kind of safe area is acceptable to both sides. The relevant agreements should include an agreement on the demilitarization of all territories. If this had been done earlier, as Russia repeatedly proposed, the tragic events in and around Zepa and Srebrenica might have been avoided. Unfortunately, there was no timely, positive response to our appeals. We must correct that mistake, even at this late date.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): Although the military action in Croatia has preoccupied us in recent days, we must not forget the tragedy and outrages perpetrated earlier in Bosnia against the eastern enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa. We must not forget those Bosnian Serb attacks, because the magnitude of the suffering they caused was enormous, even in the grim context of the former Yugoslavia. As many as 13,000 men, women and children were driven from their homes and forced to seek refuge in already heavily burdened cities under Government control, some even across the border in Serbia.

We must not forget Srebrenica and Zepa because these are areas for which this Council assumed a special responsibility. These were United Nations-protected safe areas. These were areas where we hoped our authority and legitimacy, as the voice of the international community, would offer protection from violence and attack. Tragically, the authority of this Council and the good opinion of the world appear to mean little to the leadership of the Bosnian Serbs.

We must not forget what happened in Srebrenica and Zepa, because the story of what happened there is not over. It certainly has not been fully told, and innocent lives remain at stake.

Some 10,000 civilians from Srebrenica and around 3,000 from Zepa are missing and unaccounted for. Some may be in hiding. Some may be in detention. Some are most certainly dead. We have a responsibility to investigate, to find out what we can and to see that those in hiding are granted safe passage, that those in detention are well treated or released, that the names of those who died or who were killed are made known to their families and that those responsible for illegal and outrageous activities are brought to justice.

We must not forget what happened in Srebrenica and Zepa, because there are strong grounds to believe, especially with respect to Srebrenica, that the Pale Serbs beat, raped and murdered many of those fleeing the violence. These dead were not killed in the heat of battle, they were not killed in self-defence and they were not killed by accident; they were systematically slaughtered on the instructions of the Bosnian Serb leadership.

We know this from the credible accounts of refugees who witnessed these crimes, including persons interviewed by our Government. And we know it from sensitive information shared earlier today with members of this Council, unique information obtained by the United States. The combination of these eyewitness accounts and our intelligence data provides compelling evidence of barbarous and systematic murder by the Bosnian Serbs.

The resolution we have adopted today demands that the Bosnian Serbs give immediate access to persons displaced from Srebrenica and Zepa who are in the areas under Bosnian Serb control. The resolution demands further that access be granted to persons detained against their will, requires that the rights of persons detained be respected, and reiterates that those who commit violations of international humanitarian law will be held accountable — as individuals — for those acts.

Representatives from the appropriate international organizations are ready now — today — to travel to the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina where those displaced by the violence in Srebrenica and Zepa are most likely to be. This resolution makes it clear that the Bosnian Serbs have a responsibility to permit them safe passage and to allow them to do their jobs.

The United States Government strongly supports this resolution. It is important that we focus international attention on the plight of the refugee population from Srebrenica and Zepa. We do not know all that has happened to them, but we do know that we all have a responsibility to find out.

We cannot allow ourselves, nor can we allow others, simply to shrug off the crimes committed in the aftermath of Srebrenica as an inevitable side-effect of ethnic conflict. We cannot accept rape or beatings or the murder of civilians as legitimate tactics of war. I am reminded of the words of the poet Archibald MacLeish, who wrote in 1940 of the world's passive response to the rise of fascism:

> "Murder is not absolved of immorality by committing murder. Murder is absolved of immorality by bringing men to think that murder is not evil. This only the perversion of the mind can bring about. And the perversion of the mind is only possible when those who should be heard in its defence are silent".

Establishing the truth about what has happened in Srebrenica and throughout the Balkans war is essential not only to justice, but to peace. Responsibility for the atrocities committed does not rest with the Serbs or any other people as a group: it rests with the individuals who ordered and committed the crimes. And true reconciliation will not be possible in this region until the perception of collective guilt is expunged and personal responsibility is assigned.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1995/677.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Botswana, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Oman, Russian Federation, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1010 (1995).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Ladsous (France) *(interpretation from French)*: The operation that the Bosnian Serbs have mounted against the safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa is in itself particularly grave — something that was made clear in the case of Srebrenica, in resolution 1004 (1995), whose adoption my delegation helped to secure.

The latest resolution, which the Council has just adopted, addresses a specific problem stemming from the Bosnian Serb attacks on those areas. I am referring to the treatment meted out to the displaced persons from among the civilian population, as well as to the soldiers who were taken prisoner in these attacks.

With respect to the displaced persons, we still have no news concerning thousands of people who were taken away from Srebrenica and to whom no humanitarian organization has been able to gain access. Such access must be granted immediately, and as long as these civilians, held illegally, have not been released, the forces detaining them are wholly responsible for their safety.

As to the soldiers taken prisoner, it would appear that the International Committee of the Red Cross has not yet been authorized — in violation of humanitarian law — to visit them or enabled to register them.

This situation, which involves criminal liability for those responsible for it, must come to an end immediately. The Council requests the Secretary-General to report to it before the end of the month concerning measures taken to end this situation. It is, moreover, possible that before that date it will have to take action again on this question, which involves the fate of thousands of civilians subjected to vile and barbaric treatment. We owe it to ourselves, where they are concerned, to remain especially vigilant on this matter.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): We are still horrified by the circumstantial elements that Ambassador Albright introduced this morning in the Council, indicating the very serious possibility that the mass murder of unarmed people from Srebrenica may have taken place near Bratunac a short time ago.

We believe that it is in the very interests of the Bosnian Serb leadership to immediately allow an international inquiry into this episode, which, if confirmed, would be one of the most abominable crimes against humanity since the Second World War. Needless to say, however, not even such a horrible mass murder, if confirmed, would justify acquiescence in atrocities committed by others in the former Yugoslavia.

It is in this spirit, and under the effect of such emotions, that we have just adopted the resolution on the tragic humanitarian aspect of this Srebrenica case. Like all other representatives who have spoken, we are deeply concerned over the fate of more than 7,000 people — our German colleague mentioned 7,000 to 8,000 people — who are still unaccounted for several weeks after the occupation by the Bosnian Serb forces of the safe area of Srebrenica. In his daily and highly appreciated briefings to the Council, Ambassador Gharekhan has continued to report on the absolute lack of news regarding those persons — whether they are still alive, and the places where they may be detained.

This situation is totally unacceptable. The Bosnian Serb forces have agreed to grant the International Red Cross access to all detained people from Srebrenica and Zepa. But, so far, these commitments have not been honoured. Words have not been followed by deeds.

Therefore, the resolution which has just been adopted is an opportune and timely initiative. Reaffirming resolution 1004 (1995) and the presidential statement of 25 July, which asked the Bosnian Serbs to immediately withdraw from the two "safe areas" — a definition which in the present circumstances sounds highly ironic — it very rightly expresses deep concern over reports of grave violations of international and humanitarian law in and around Srebrenica and demands that the Pale authorities grant the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international agencies immediate access to persons displaced from Srebrenica and Zepa who are under the control of their forces.

Furthermore, the United Nations or the Red Cross should be permitted at once to visit and register any detained person and conduct an immediate investigation of the places of the presumed mass graves, informing the International Tribunal for crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia about their findings. Further procrastination or, even worse, denial of such an authorization should simply not be tolerated by the international community and by this Council.

The images of the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa which the media have transmitted all over the world and the reports of the refugees and displaced persons who have left those areas are very much alive in the memory of the Italian people. Therefore, we welcome the present initiative of the Security Council and very much hope that it will finally convince the Bosnian Serb leadership to comply with the most basic, elementary rules of human behaviour.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): This Council expressed itself on the situation in Srebrenica and Zepa last month, and what concerns us here today is the aftermath of the Bosnian Serbs' overrunning of these two safe areas — if that is the right expression.

Several thousand men and boys are missing. Bosnian Serb authorities have been refusing to provide any information about their fate or to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross, or any other outside observer for that matter, access to them. We fear the worst, and just today these fears have been strengthened by an important report in *The New York Times* and by evidence presented to the Council earlier by the United States delegation. These reports suggest that those missing have become victims of one of the greatest atrocities of this war. The possibility of several thousand Bosnians having been butchered stirs the memory of the Katyn forest, where during the Second World War Stalin's murderers similarly butchered several thousand officers of the Polish Army.

Confirmation of these reports would raise the spectre of war criminality in its most heinous form. Abuses by individuals occur in most wars, but wholesale murder of thousands requires organization and orders from high-level authorities. There is no doubt that these authorities — that is to say, every one of the responsible individuals — will be identified, tried by the International Tribunal, and for ever stigmatized and ostracized by the international community.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): Barely one month ago, this Council, following the adoption of resolution 1004 (1995), expressed grave concern at the plight of the civilian population in Srebrenica as a result of Bosnian Serb attacks, and demanded unimpeded access to the area for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other

international humanitarian agencies. The Council's adoption today of a further resolution underlines the international community's continuing concern about increasing reports that atrocities have taken place in and around Srebrenica and Zepa following the Bosnian Serb military offensive. It is particularly worrying that the whereabouts of so many inhabitants of Srebrenica are still unknown; the evidence provided to Council members today by the United States delegation was particularly disturbing.

The British Government therefore joins with others in demanding that the Bosnian Serb authorities give immediate access to the international humanitarian agencies, and cooperate fully and unreservedly with the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and others to determine the whereabouts of those still unaccounted for. We look for the early release of those who are still detained, and we remind the Bosnian Serb authorities of their obligation under international humanitarian law to ensure the safety and well-being of those who are under their control.

The focus of events in the former Yugoslavia has already shifted elsewhere since the attacks last month on Srebrenica and Zepa. But it is imperative that the international community should not forget or lose sight of those civilians still suffering from the consequences of those attacks. By the beginning of next month, the Secretary-General will report back to the Council on progress in respect of implementation of the resolution that we have just adopted. The British Government looks forward to that report. The onus is now on the Bosnian Serb authorities to demonstrate whether or not they are prepared to cooperate constructively.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The conflict in the Balkans has continued to grow qualitatively worse in a whirlwind that has swept away the resolutions of this Council and breached all the limits established by civilization. Meanwhile, as on other occasions, we in the Security Council are striving, given the circumstances, to prevent the deterioration of a situation created by the flagrant violation of established norms in this sphere.

The unjustifiable attacks on the safe areas of Zepa and Srebrenica constitute yet another step towards the abyss. In our view, they also mark a fresh challenge to the decisions of the organized international community and a spectacle as cowardly as it is senseless.

With resolution 1004 (1995) we sought to remedy the consequences of one of these attacks, and to avoid worse ills by attempting to facilitate intervention by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), among other humanitarian organizations, whose presence has been made essential by this shameful situation. Unfortunately, once more today we are obliged to say to the Bosnian Serbs that free access to these areas is essential for all personnel of humanitarian agencies. The Serb party must meet this requirement. Otherwise, it will give credence to the grave accusations and suppositions concerning its possible serious and repeated violations of international humanitarian law in these areas. We must say in this connection that the evidence of these violations presented to us day after day challenges our ability to absorb it. Today has been such a day.

Of course, our action does not end there. We must also remind the Bosnian Serbs of the self-evident fact that they, like everyone else, are accountable to the international community for any violations of humanitarian law they may have committed. That account will be settled sooner or later; it is only a matter of time.

I want to touch on two final points. The first is the rather bitter taste left in the mouth of my delegation by the two resolutions we have adopted today, and by their having been considered as a sort of package. In both resolutions we address possible or alleged violations of humanitarian law. No violation of such norms is more or less serious, appalling or unacceptable just because another party to a conflict may also have committed similar violations. That can never be the case.

The second concerns the ever more pressing need to find a political solution to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. My delegation hopes that countries with a real capacity to take action towards a settlement will pool their efforts and act now. Only their concerted action can make the parties abandon the option of armed conflict, which, as we have repeatedly said, cannot be used to build a lasting peace.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Indonesia.

The Security Council has today consecutively adopted two separate draft resolutions, one on Croatia and now one on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The adoption of these resolutions serves as a reminder of the fact that

the conflicts in the two countries are closely interlinked. Further, we view the adoption of the two resolutions as symbolizing the international community's renewed determination to arrest the cycle of violence and the logic of war which for far too long have dominated the mind-set of those directly involved.

The Indonesian delegation is firmly committed to the demands contained in the resolution that has just been adopted. We condemn the Bosnian Serbs' seizure of the safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa, and their violations of humanitarian law in those areas. We are appalled by reports, confirmed today, of atrocities, mass murder and other violations of humanitarian law committed by the Bosnian Serbs against Bosnian men and boys in Srebrenica. These reported atrocities underline the need for prompt action by the international community to ensure Bosnian Serb compliance with the demands contained in the resolution. In this regard, we would like in particular to echo the demand for safe access for representatives of United Nations and other international agencies to persons in need of humanitarian assistance. The fulfilment of this demand is crucial for the safety and security of those members of the civilian population of Srebrenica and Zepa who are still unaccounted for. The international community should continue to work towards their unconditional and immediate release.

Finally, my delegation would like to express our appreciation to the sponsors of the draft resolution, and to extend our appreciation to the women and men of the United Nations Protection Force and the International Committee of the Red Cross, who have done their utmost to alleviate the suffering of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their hour of need.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers on the list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.